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SIPDIS

NSC FOR APNSA HADLEY AND SENIOR DIRECTOR ANSLEY

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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR URGES TURKISH NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER
TO WORK ON NEW DIPLOMATIC APPROACH ON IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM

Classified By: Ambassador Wilson for reasons 1.4 (b), (d), and (h).

Summary

11. (C) Ambassador used his Jan. 2 introductory call on National Security Council Secretary-General Alpogan to urge Turkey to define what new role it is ready to play in the diplomatic effort to deal with Iran's nuclear ambitions. Alpogan assured the Ambassador that Iran's nuclear program is a real concern in Ankara, adding that Iran's intentions toward Turkey seem unclear. The two agreed on the need for a broad-based, cross-sectarian government in Iraq. Alpogan said he wanted to use his January trip to Washington to get U.S. thinking on Iran, Iraq, Syria, Cyprus, and other issues in U.S.-Turkish relations. On his return, he will convey those views, and his own evaluation of where we "diverge and converge," to Turkey's leaders. End summary.

Alpogan: We Need More "Harmonizing"

12. (C) Alpogan laid out his plans for his first official Washington visit (the week of Jan. 23) since his appointment 18 months ago. He intends to listen to and assess the latest U.S. thinking on the way forward on Iraq, Syria, and Iran, and then provide his thinking on where our positions may "converge and diverge" to the leadership in Ankara. Turkey and the U.S. "need to do some more harmonizing" on these issues in 2006, Alpogan asserted. Ambassador noted that Alpogan's interlocutors in Washington will also be interested in other issues, such as Cyprus, Turkey's assessment of cooperation on the PKK, and what to expect internally in Turkey.

13. (C) Alpogan and the Ambassador agreed that we should work together to encourage a broad-based, cross-sectarian government in Iraq. Alpogan hoped that it would not take as long as in early 2005 to form a government. Ambassador pointed out that many in Washington will want to hear how Turkey plans to assist the new Iraqi government when it emerges. A concrete gesture might be for PM Erdogan or FonMin Gul to visit Baghdad or perhaps receive the new Iraqi PM when he takes office. On Syria, Alpogan urged that the UN investigation take its course. Ambassador noted recent press reports that Asad may visit Turkey soon and urged that any such visit not take place in the near term.

Turkish Diplomatic Efforts Needed on Iran...

14. (C) Ambassador strongly encouraged Alpogan to be ready to explain how Turkey will engage more forcefully in diplomatic efforts to resolve the Iran nuclear issue. We understand Ankara's reluctance to isolate Tehran, but what role is there for Turkey beyond this position? Ahmedinejad's recent statements on Israel have only raised the level of anxiety on Iran's intentions.

...Ankara Still Trying to Divine Tehran's Real Intentions

15. (C) Alpogan sought to assure the Ambassador that Iran's nuclear ambitions "are a real concern in Ankara," and that the GOT is committed to cooperate on a diplomatic solution. While Iran is a long-time Turkish neighbor, its intentions are rarely clear. For example, while FonMin Mottaki's recent visit here brought extensive press coverage, the visit was light on substance, and Turkish officials were disappointed that Mottaki did not come bearing solutions to significant commercial disputes involving the Turkish airport services provider TAV (which was supposed to manage Tehran's new airport until the Iranians withdrew the contract) and cell phone service provider Turkcell. Had Mottaki brought positive messages to Ankara on these disputes, Alpogan said, it would have provided clues that Tehran genuinely wanted to improve ties. Now the GOT is not sure what to think.

16. (C) The Ambassador again urged Alpogan to think in concrete terms about what the GOT will actually do to support

the diplomatic effort to end Iran's nuclear program.
Washington expects that Turkey should be seen as being firmly
with us in this endeavor; there should be as little space as
possible between us.
WILSON